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11th Ed. 2d. 1

S E R M O N.

B. Scaly.

It was not an open Enemy that hath done me this Dishonour: For then I could have borne it.

But — it was even thou my Companion, my Guide, and my own familiar Friend.

PSALM lv. VERSES 12. 14.

BY THE REV. JOHN HORNE,
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T O

JAMES TOWNSEND, Esq;

DEAR SIR,

THE faithless desertion of friends, and the insensibility shewn to the misfortunes of others, need not be represented more general than they are, to make a reflecting mind philosophical or religious. Instances of a contrary conduct and disposition are rather necessary to prevent men from becoming unsocial or desperate. The moment and the manner in which you have exerted yourself in the cause of your country and humanity, whose common rights have been most grossly violated in the person of a much-injured and oppressed individual, must endear you to every heart that is capable of being warmed with public-spirit, or melted by generous compassion. I have, therefore, chosen thus to prefix your Name to a publication of this nature, as its most striking contrast. I have reason to be well persuaded,

ed,

ed, that the noble motives from which you act will attend you through life; and that no part of your conduct will ever set my principle at variance with my private friendship.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the regard and confidence with which you have honoured me; and to profess myself, with the greatest esteem and affection,

DEAR SIR,

Your most obedient and faithful

Humble Servant,

Feb. 21, 1769.

JOHN HORNE.

A

S E R M O N.

PSALM LV. VERSES 12. 14.

*It was not an open Enemy that hath done me this dishonour;
For then I could have borne it.*

*But — it was even thou, my Companion, my Guide, and
my own familiar Friend.*

I CANNOT tell how these words may have affected others;
but I have never read them myself, without being sensibly touch-
ed at this pathetic impatience of David.

I N all his *other* trials we find him patient and resigned; but
this he owns he *could* not bear.

B

THERE

THERE are very few of us who have been at all conversant in the world, to whom it has not happened, at some time or other, to feel the same impatience on the same account. And because a disappointment in friendship is the most common, and at the same time the most stinging of all others,—Listen to me whilst I propose to you a method how you may escape this anguish, and never know “how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a faithless FRIEND.”

FORGIVE me, O my God, that I am forced from this place to offer thee this public dishonour, by putting thy friendship in competition with that of Man!

THOU, O God, best knowest how little trust there is reposed in thee; and how necessary is this exhortation, to persuade thy infatuated creature—Man—to withdraw his confidence from his fellow-worm, and repose it wholly upon thee his Creator, who alone art mighty both to save and to destroy.

THE distrust of God’s friendship, and want of reliance upon him, springs from nothing else but infidelity. And this universal infidelity is so great, that our Saviour always expressed the utmost surprize when he met with any one who believed his word. We, who know not ourselves, nor our own constitution, should rather think it matter of wonder, to find any one in Israel, who, after all the mighty works performed before him, did *not* believe in Christ. And yet he, who best knew what was in man, and needed not that any one should testify unto him, he never expressed the least surprize at their *Infidelity*; but was always astonished at their *Faith*.

TO give one instance amongst others.

MAT-

M A T T H E W VIII.

5. " WHEN Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a certain Centurion, beseeching him,

6. " AND saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7. " AND Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8. " THE Centurion answered, and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed.

10. " When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you" — (that is, by my own truth I swear unto you,) " — I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

AND if not in Israel, where should he find it?

WOULD he find it amongst you?

EXAMINE yourselves well, and see which of you is there who does not place more trust and confidence in man than in God.

WHOM do you make your friend?

WHOM do you follow?

WHOM do you solicit?

FROM whom do you expect?

TELL

TELL me——which is most frequented amongst us——The Temple of the Lord? or the Levees of the Great? The Courts of Princes? or the House of God?

IN our sickness we call not on the Lord, but on the Physician; as if God could not heal.

WE put our trust in Man; as if God was not the Lord faithful and true.

AND we labour for wealth; as if the earth was not his, nor he all-sufficient.

IN our physician we can see health; in our friends a sure refuge; and in our wealth security.

IT is natural to suppose, that this general practice proceeds from its general success. Let us examine, therefore, whether such a supposition is well-founded.

AND by this enquiry we shall easily be able to determine which is most desirable——The friendship of Man, which you so ardently solicit;——or the friendship of God, who so anxiously solicits you.

CHILDREN of worldly wisdom! keep your eyes upon the balance! It is in your scales that we weigh now the friendship of Man against the friendship of God.——Reason and religion forbid any comparison.

AND

I.

AND here indeed it cannot be denied, but that men are generally very generous—in promises—vastly liberal——of words.

LET us listen to one of these your trusty friends.——

WHAT does he say?

ALL the services that are in his power he begs you to *command*: nor can you possibly do to him a greater favour, than by giving him an opportunity to oblige you.

BUT should you unkindly take him at his word, Ah! how soon would you find yourself mistaken! and see that, as Laban served Jacob, so he, when the time of execution came, instead of the beautiful Rachael that he promised you, would put you off with Leah.

NOTHING being more common with men than to profess—— Oh! much;——perform——little.

NOT so your heavenly friend. The words of his mouth are faithfulness and truth.

AND whereas men usually profess more than they execute, he, on the contrary, bestows always more than he promises.

WE read in the 19th chapter of the 2d book of Kings, that God promised to Hezekiah concerning the King of Assyria, “He shall not come into this city; nor shoot an arrow there; nor come before it with shield; nor cast a bank against it.”

TO fulfil this promise nothing more was necessary than to cause the army of the Assyrians, by some means or other, to raise the siege of Jerusalem. And this might easily have been done, either by a mutiny of the soldiers; or discord amongst the leaders; or by their presence being necessary in some other place.

BUT tho' this would have satisfied his promise, it did not the divine Giver of it. For "the same night the angel of the Lord" went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, and left dead "upon the place an hundred four score and five thousand carcases," and their camp a prey to the Jews.

AGAIN we read in the 3d chapter of the 1st book of Kings, that God promised to give to Solomon what he should ask. Solomon chose wisdom, which, by his choice, he seemed even then to be in possession of: for never yet did any one desire *more* wisdom who had not already *some*.

GOD therefore might very faithfully have fulfilled this promise, and have given him (as indeed he generally does dispense them in this world) wisdom joined with neglect and poverty.

BUT, no. It is *God*, and not *a Man*, that executes. It is not sufficient for him not to be *worse* than his word,—he will be *better*. And therefore to wisdom, his promise, he super-added riches and honour, which he had not promised. And in the same manner you may observe, throughout the holy scriptures, that the completion of God's promises always exceeds the terms in which they are made.

II.

THIS is indeed faithfulness. There is some little difference between *this* manner of proceeding, and that of your *other* friends.

NOR

NOR is this difference very difficult to be accounted for; when you consider the motives of *their* friendship.

FOR what are they your friends? For what do they come about you?—To impart to you of *their* good fortune, or to partake of *yours*?

WHAT is the aim of all that obsequiousness, that flattery and zeal, with which they attach themselves to your person, and devote themselves to your service?—*They* will tell you that it is pure affection to your person.—You are very good indeed if you believe so. No! They are the friends of your riches and of your power. Of the employments you have to dispose of; of the favours you can bestow.

THEY are the friends of your prosperity. Just such friends as the bees are to the flowers—to suck from them their sweetest juice. Such friends as the ivy is to the oak—that creeping up its sides, it may exalt itself to a higher station.

AND that this is really the case, I will appeal to your own experience. Do you not always see that the *Rich* have *many* friends—the *Poor*, *not one*.

No! God only is the friend who seeks you for *your* sake. He seeks *you*—not *yours*.

III.

AND that he does so is most apparent by the choice he makes. A choice so very different from that of man. To whom does God make all his professions of friendship? Is it not to those who are in Poverty, Persecution, Oppression, Disgrace and Misery. “For
“thou

“thou art a God of the afflicted (saith Judith;) an Helper of the
 “oppressed; an Upholder of the weak; a Protector of the forlorn;
 “a Saviour of them that are without hope.” Judith 9 and 11.

N O N E ever proved this truth more plainly than the Israelites. To whom, if ever God shewed himself partial; for whom if ever God wrought any wondrous works;—it was when he saw them reduced by the Egyptians to such a state of wretchedness, that
 “their life was spent with grief; and their years with sighing.”

T H E N it was that with a mighty hand, and with an out-stretched arm, he freed them from their cruel oppressors.

T H E N it was that, for their sake, the earth, the air, the fire, and the water, became the instruments of vengeance: and those elements were made to serve for the destruction of *that very mankind*, for whose benefit and advantage alone they are and were created.

N O R is this his manner of proceeding confined only to the Israelites.

R E C O L L E C T Elias.—Did ever God work such astonishing miracles in his favour; as when he saw him abandoned and forsaken by every friend, by every human defence, the destined victim of tyranny and cruel power?

T H E N it was that for his sake he rained down fire from heaven!

R E M E M B E R Elisha!—Did ever God so openly and manifestly undertake his defence, as when he saw him fallen so very low, that his weakness and infirmities had made him the laughing-stock and ridicule even of children?

T H E N

THEN it was that for his sake, the beasts of the forest, with a cruel compassion, forsook their dens to vindicate the helpless prophet—the abject out-cast of mankind!

AGAIN—When was it that our Saviour discovered how dear Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, was to him?

WAS it not even then, when he was become an object of disgust and loathing even to his own sisters?—

THEN it was that the Jews who accompanied him to the tomb, astonished at the uncommon marks of his affection, said one to another—“ See how he loved him !”

BUT they ought rather to have said—See how he *does* love him;—and not how he *did* love him :—Since our Saviour plainly shewed, that *his* friendship did not end with life ; but that he still continued the same warm affection to his friend, though rotting in the grave.

O U R *human* friends indeed do not often act in this manner. On the contrary, no sooner do they see us falling from our height and happiness, than they instantly found a retreat ; and perhaps betake themselves to a precipitate flight.—And those ungrateful companions, who formerly basked in the sun-shine of our prosperity,—when the cloud of adversity is hanging over us, remove themselves far from us ; and withdraw from the acquaintance of him whom before they almost adored.

G O D forbid that I should wish any of you ever to prove the truth of what I say, by your own proper experience !

N O ! I pray for your continuance in every earthly felicity : and that God may shower down upon you the choicest of his Blessings !

B U T should your houses, by any accident, at any time, begin to totter——Alas ! how instantly would you see all those domestic swallows, who now build their nests in your roof,——how soon would you see them, at the very first shock, desert both it and them.

F O R when misfortune comes upon us, then it is that our friends begin to wish, with David, that they *had the wings of a dove*——that they may *flee away* from our approaching ruin ;——and *be at rest* from our importunity and complaints.

MISERABLE Job !

I F ever any one had reason to expect faithfulness from Man, and assistance in distress ;——it was surely Job.

I F feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked ; protecting the orphan, and defending the widow ;——if these, and every other office of universal and generous compassion, could give any one a claim to gratitude and returns of love——he surely had the strongest.

A N D yet when his distress and pressing calamity fell upon him,——so far was he from finding some fond breast on which he could repose ;——some pious hand to raise him from the dust ;——some hospitable

hospitable roof to shelter him from misery ;——that he was left to lie like a dead dog cast out upon a dunghill.

THE Sabeans fell upon his oxen and his asses, and slew his servants with the edge of the sword ; and *one* only escaped to tell him.

THE fire fell down from heaven, and burnt up the sheep and the shepherds ; and again *one* escaped to tell him.

THE Chaldeans fell upon his camels, and slew the servants ; yet still *one* escaped to tell him.

THERE came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house where his children and their friends were banquetting ; and slew them all—except *one*, who still escaped to tell him.

BUT the last stroke was more compleat, and more cruel than all the rest.

INGRATITUDE — (more fell than the Sabeans, the Fire, the Chaldeans, and the Tempest) seized on the hearts of all his friends : and from this plague—*not one* escaped to tell him.

Hear his own Words.

“ To him that is afflicted, says he, pity should be shewn from
“ his friends. But mine acquaintance are verily estranged from
“ me.

“ My kinsfolk have failed ; and my familiar friends have for-
“ gotten me.

“ THEY

" **T H E Y** that dwell in my house count me for a stranger :
 " I am an alien in their fight.

" I CALLED my servant :—and he gave me no answer. I even
 " intreated him with my mouth.

" M Y breath is strange to my wife ; tho' I intreated her for
 " the children's sake of my own body.

" ALL my inward friends abhor me ; and they whom I loved
 " are turned against me.

" Have pity upon me,—Have pity upon me—O Y E M Y
 " FRIENDS."

BUT perhaps you will tell me, that I have rather exaggerated the matter : for that Job, even deserted as he was, had still three friends left, who came together unanimously and " by appointment, to
 " mourn with him and to comfort him : " that they no sooner saw him than " they lifted up their voice and wept : they rent every
 " one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards
 " heaven."

WELL ! It is true.
 He had three friends. But those three friends are the very persons who come to confirm more strongly what I have been saying.

F O R, pray tell me—Left they not their friend in the same distress and wretchedness in which they found him ?

Did

DID they contribute the smallest matter to relieve his want?

DID they offer him one rag to clothe him in his nakedness?

ON the contrary, hear what Job himself said to them.

“ Now ye see my casting down, says he, ye are afraid?”

A F R A I D! of what?—What was this mighty fear with which their Friends calamity inspired them?

W E R E they afraid lest they too should fall into the same misfortune? Or that the same disease should happen unto them?

No! they feared lest they should be obliged to contribute to his relief. And so Job tells them in the very next verse.

W H Y are ye afraid, says he? “ Did I say—Bring unto me?
“ Or did I ask you to give me a part of your substance?”

W H I C H words give us plainly to understand, that their principal concern and fear was for themselves and for their own substance.

I F then even from those friends, whose natures are more soft and tender than the generality, the utmost friendship and assistance we must look for, consist in empty words, and unavailing pity:—What must we expect from those who are of a rougher make and constitution?—Will they not leave us neglected and unheeded to languish in our misery?—to pour forth our life in tears,—and waste our soul with sighing?

E

I T

IT may be well perhaps if they do not aggravate our sorrows.
 —Like those ungrateful villagers, who, after having danced and
 sung, and sported all the summer under the shade of some fair spread-
 ing tree:—when winter comes, and they behold it dry and wither-
 ed, are then the first to seize the bill, and wound it without mercy:
 hewing down trunk and boughs, and root and branches.

SINCE such then, and so precarious is the tenure of human
 friendship; since, like a pointed spear, it seldom fails to pierce thro'
 those who lean upon it, let it be our wisdom, as it is our duty, to
 place our confidence in God.

AND though, by the condition of our nature, we must find our
Companions amongst men, let God only be followed as our *Guide*, and
 trusted as our *familiar Friend*.

F I N I S.





